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ABSTRACT

Success of the National Network for Curriculum Coordination in Vocational and Technical Education (NNCCVTE) should help State Directors of Vocational Education generate support for their curriculum development and coordination programs. Its early beginnings came in 1970 with "Part I" Program funding. In 1971 funding of several projects gave impetus to development of career education, and a Curriculum Management Center was established in the Bureau of Adult Vocational and Technical Education. Thirteen problems in curriculum and management were identified as bases for the curriculum development program. From them were developed four primary purposes for establishment of a National Network for Curriculum Coordination: information sharing, standards, curriculum needs as a basis for planning, and coordination. Recently, an opinion survey of State Directors of Vocational Education and State Directors of Community and Junior Colleges was made concerning NNCCVTE. (Responses are detailed for five questions: use and frequency of use of NNCCVTE, reasons for not using its services, whether funds diverted by NNCCVTE could be used to better advantage and how, suggestions to encourage extensive use of NNCCVTE, and changes in NNCCVTE to better serve needs of vocational and technical education. Fifteen recommendations for mobilizing support of key persons are listed.) (YLB)

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NNCCVTE Occasional Paper Series

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**Mobilizing the Support of Key
Persons or How to Work with
Your State Director**
Robert M. Worthington, Ph.D.

The National Network for
Curriculum Coordination in
Vocational & Technical Education

**MOBILIZING THE SUPPORT OF KEY PERSONS
OR
HOW TO WORK WITH YOUR STATE DIRECTOR**

**By
Robert M. Worthington, Ph.D.**

**Printed through East Central Curriculum Management Center on behalf of the National Network
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THE OCCASIONAL PAPERS SERIES

Emerging from the 1980 Director's meeting of the National Network for Curriculum Coordination in Vocational and Technical Education (NNCCVTE) was the idea for publication of an Occasional Papers Series. The purpose of the series is to present ideas and conclusions relevant to current curriculum concerns in the field of vocational education and it is felt the collection will become a permanent contribution to that field.

Appropriately chosen to introduce the series is a presentation given by Dr. Robert M. Worthington during the same concurrent meeting held in Sparks, Nevada, an address containing valuable historical background and perspective.

Papers published in the series will be selected by the NNCCVTE Directors and may be submitted through any of the regional center offices listed below.

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**MOBILIZING THE SUPPORT OF KEY PERSONS
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In order to mobilize the support of key persons for any project or endeavor, it is necessary that the basic principles of the project be clearly understood by all involved. Before we can convince anyone to agree with or to support our efforts, we must be certain that we, ourselves, understand the conceptual framework which provided the foundation for what it is we are attempting to promote. In this case, of course, we are talking about the "National Network for Curriculum Coordination in Vocational Technical Education." This is a concept in which I have been heavily involved since the 1960s when, as State Director of Vocational Education in New Jersey, I participated in a federally funded project to determine ways to coordinate activities of State Vocational Education curriculum laboratories. Later, as Associate U.S. Commissioner of Education and Director of the Bureau of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education, we were able to utilize discretionary funds under the amended Vocational Act of 1963 to elicit changes in vocational and technical education through curriculum development and management. In 1971, we funded a comprehensive national study of the state vocational education curriculum laboratories. This study directed by Dr. John H. Koenig at Fairleigh-Dickinson University, provided us with much of the background data needed to justify the establishment of the National Curriculum Management Center and five regional centers which later evolved into today's National Network for Curriculum Coordination in Vocational and Technical Education.

Let me share with you some of the early beginnings of the national curriculum development and coordination movement and review some of the national problems which we hoped to solve through the establishment of a national center for vocational education curriculum management.

I will also review the original purposes of the Network and provide you with the results of an opinion survey of State Directors of Vocational Education and State Directors of Community and Junior Colleges conducted in preparation for this presentation. I will conclude by presenting a number of recommendations for mobilizing the support of key persons for furthering the work of the National Network for Curriculum Coordination in Vocational and Technical Education.

We were fortunate in the Bureau of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education to be able to acquire the services of Dr. Elizabeth J. Simpson as Director of the National Vocational Education Curriculum Management Center. Much of the historical background presented here has come from Dr. Simpson's personal files.

The first funding of the "Part I" Program was in 1970 when \$880,000 was appropriated. Release of these funds in fiscal 1970 was a sole source basis. Several projects to give impetus to the development of career education were funded between April and July of 1971.

Later that year a Curriculum Management Center was established in the Bureau of Adult Vocational and Technical Education. The staff consisted of Dr. Simpson as Director and four professionals reassigned from other program areas. From time to time the staff was augmented by graduate fellows from U.C.L.A. under the Education Professions Development Act. To expedite the Center's work, Dr. Simpson reported directly to the Association Commissioner.

In order to assure common understanding an early activity of the staff was to agree on definitions of terms. The term, "Curriculum" for purposes of program operation, was defined as "a plan for a teaching-learning experience consisting of objectives, content, learning experiences, teaching aids, and means of evaluation." "Curriculum Management" was conceived as including "decision-making, planning

and implementation with respect to: development of curricula, diffusion and dissemination of curricula; basic work in the foundations of curriculum development; and the coordination of curriculum effort with developments in educational technology and the systems of delivery and administration."

Rationale for the emerging National Curriculum Center was based on the assumption that the curriculum is central to educational effectiveness and that through curriculum management major educational breakthroughs can be achieved.

National problems in curriculum development and management were identified by Dr. Simpson and her staff. Some of these which served as a basis for decisions for the curriculum development program were:

1. There had been no comprehensive state-of-the-art study of curriculum development in vocational-technical education.
2. Curriculum efforts in vocational and technical education were uncoordinated, although it was clearly apparent that much curriculum work was being done in a variety of places by various individuals and agencies.
3. The total effort in curriculum development lacked coherence. Some aspects of vocational and technical education were receiving much attention, some little or no attention. The quality of curriculum work varied greatly.
4. Few curriculum materials were available which were based on the expanded concept of preparation for the occupational role embodied in the term, "career education."
5. Little attention had been given the relative effectiveness of the processes of curriculum development. Most of the attention had centered on the end product, that is, the curriculum guide.
6. Insufficient attention had been given bases for curriculum decisions other than task analyses of the occupation.
7. Many curriculum guides in use had not been validated through rigorous testing.
8. Fast developing "technology of education" presented new challenges to curriculum developers in vocational-technical education.
9. Although some attention had been given curricula for those with special needs, such as the handicapped, disadvantaged, and gifted, greater efforts were needed.
10. Dissemination of curricula for vocational-technical education was a major problem. Curricula were developed and guides printed, but they simply gathered dust on the shelf.
11. Little attention had been given to how and where curriculum materials were used when they were made available.
12. In teacher education programs, some emphasis was given the procedures of curriculum development, but little attention was focused on how to select and adapt curriculum materials already available.
13. Typically, curriculum development courses in universities gave attention to development of curriculum materials but not to the problems of curriculum management.

These were some of the national curriculum development problems in vocational and technical education identified in 1971. Considerable progress has been made toward the solution of the problems, but there is still a long way to go. Four primary purposes for the establishment of a National Network for Curriculum Coordination were:

1. **Information Sharing** - to provide a mechanism sharing information on curriculum materials available and under development, and for reporting on coordination efforts.
2. **Standards** - to develop and recommend guidelines for curricula and curriculum development with the ultimate goal of increasing the effectiveness of curriculum materials and enhancing their transportability.

3. **Curriculum Needs as a Basis for Planning** - to establish and maintain a system for determining curriculum needs in vocational-technical education and reporting conclusions to the field.

4. **Coordination** - to coordinate activities in curriculum development, dissemination and utilization with the aim of avoiding unwarranted duplication, enhancing quality of effort, increasing the transportability of curriculum materials, and improving the acceptance and use of curriculum materials.

In 1971 the National Center for Curriculum Management made several grant awards which provided the beginnings of the National Network for Curriculum Coordination. Original grant awards related to the National Network were designed to improve the capabilities of state curriculum laboratories to operate as curriculum management centers, and to reorient their efforts toward curriculum development and management in career and vocational education.

On a competitive basis, five centers were awarded grants and it became apparent that the greatest need was to coordinate their efforts. The original five awards were in fiscal 1972. In fiscal 1973, grants were awarded to two additional centers in other regions of the country bringing the total number of centers to seven. Later my successor Deputy Commissioner William Pierce, reduced the number to six and re-assigned each leadership center in such a way as to make the regional lines contiguous with the Office of Education boundaries. This was a very controversial decision that was unpopular with most states and not conducive to achieving the national purposes of the centers.

In my last presentation to the State Directors of Vocational Education, as Associate Commissioner of the Bureau of Adult Vocational and Technical Education, I said that the most significant activity we had initiated in 1971, 1972 or 1973 was the establishment of the National Network for Curriculum Coordination. The Network has made a significant contribution to the improvement and expansion of vocational education. Its full potential has yet to be realized!

In preparing for this presentation for today, a personal letter was written to every State Director of Vocational Education and to every State Administrator of Community and Junior Colleges in the United States. I requested that each Director respond to a very brief opinion survey questionnaire. We asked only five questions:

1. Does your office use the service of the National Network for Curriculum Coordination in Vocational and Technical Education (NNCCVTE)? If so, to what extent (Frequently, Occasionally, Seldom)

2. If you do not use the services of NNCCVTE, why not?

3. Do you think that the NNCCVTE diverts funds for its operation which might be used by your own office to better advantage? If so, how many federal dollars are involved and how would your office use these dollars?

4. What suggestions do you have that if implemented would encourage extensive use of the NNCCVTE?

5. How would you change the operation of the NNCCVTE to better serve the needs of vocational and technical education in your state?

We were pleased at the excellent responses received from both groups. 76% of the State Directors of Vocational Education and 58% of the State Administrators for Community and Junior Colleges responded. Responses from State Directors of Vocational Education follow:

Question 1. Does your office use the service of the National Network for Curriculum Coordination in Vocational and Technical Education?

● 92% replied affirmatively. 8% said "no" in response to the question.

In reply to the second part of the question asking "to what extent do you use the service?"

- 53% said frequently, 24% said occasionally and 15% said seldom or never.

Those who used the Network "seldom or never" stated in answering Question 2 that their reasons for not doing so were:

- their state had a curriculum development center of its own that produced all that they needed.
- they were a part of a consortium of states and therefore did not need the national network.
- all they get from the National Network is a catalog of materials available and unless they can review the materials they will not order them from a catalog.

In response to Question 3 (Do you think that the NNCCVTE diverts funds for its operation which might be used for your own office to better advantage?) Only 13% of those responding stated that they felt the NNCCVTE diverted funds which might be used to better advantage by their own state office.

When asked "How would you use these dollars if they were available to you?" some stated:

- that they would use them to start a center in their own state.
- that the small amount of additional funds available to them would not permit them to make a significant impact on curriculum needs.
- that they would use the dollars for statewide curriculum efforts.
- use the money for disseminating materials more relevant to their own state.

The majority favored the use of the federal funds for the National Network and the consensus was that the amount of funds involved provided a greater service to the states through the NNCCVTE than they would through state control.

In response to Question 4 (What suggestions do you have that if implemented would encourage extensive use of the NNCCVTE?) most frequent suggestions were:

- Move curriculum to a top priority at the national level.
- Increase the national curriculum development budget.
- Develop a procedure by which the states are better informed of what other states are planning to do before the fact, thus improving coordination and better use of funds.
- Provide more awareness information concerning the network.
- Speed up the response time for the national search so as to better serve individual needs and encourage greater use of the service.
- Provide awareness of the value of cooperation among states rather than expending larger sums in independent development of materials.
- A stronger commitment from the U.S. Department of Education in support of the National Network is needed.
- The NNCCVTE should be used as the principal dissemination system for vocational education curriculum materials.
- Use the Network for determination of priorities for curriculum development under "Projects of National Significance."
- The NNCCVTE should provide more advertising material to the states so that state level administrators can keep local vocational educators informed about what is available.
- Materials developed with tax dollars should be placed in the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC).
- A sample copy of each Network instructional curriculum document should be made available to the state liaison representative and to the appropriate state program consultant.
- All six centers should catalog and sell the curriculum produced by the member states for printing cost recovery.
- Each State Liaison Representative should have the major share of his time devoted to curriculum

activities. Intra-state networks for curriculum coordination should be developed further by the State Liaison Representatives.

- There is a great need for strong leadership at the national level. For example, one state director said:

"At the present time, each center functions independently and this should not be allowed to happen. Strong program leadership at the national level is needed to give relevance to the NNCCVTE movement. We have not had this at the federal level since before Frances Keppl took over as U.S. Commissioner of Education."

- States should make an effort to become oriented to what NNCCVTE has to offer and support the regional centers.
- Too many states have a "chip on their shoulder" about the National Network and in some cases inter-state jealousies exist so that some states do not support the regional centers or the National Network.
- Regional Centers and state Curriculum Centers should exchange sample copies of every publication. A quarterly publication list of new titles, sources and costs should be widely distributed..or a catalog should be published of all curriculum materials developed by all states for dissemination by State Liaison Representatives.
- Every state should have direct input into the selection of materials reproduced and services provided by the regional centers.
- The NNCCVTE should take over cataloging and dissemination for the states.
- A central unit of the National Network should be established which would encourage all states to use the information from all of the centers, not just the one in their region.
- Increase the services of the national network. States do not get enough service. Representatives of the National Network and/or regional centers should visit every state.

In response to Question 5 — (How would you change the operation of the NNCCVTE to better serve the needs of Vocational and Technical education in your state?) State Directors of Vocational Education said:

- Improve the stature of the curriculum development office in the U.S. Department of Education.
- Eliminate the National Network completely and turn it over to the states.
- Do a better public relations job providing information of curriculum coordination projects under way with the names of contact persons to keep the state directors informed.
- Continue the operation as is except fund regional curriculum coordination consortiums fully to meet state needs.
- Provide funding to assist the State Liaison Representatives to carry out the activities of the National Network.
- Fund the National Network at a much higher level so that the regional centers can develop and adapt curriculum for the member states.
- Fund the particular regional center as a manager of the National Network. The National Network has no real staff to coordinate its efforts.
- We recommend no change - we like the National Network as it is.
- State Liaison Representatives and state office staffs should meet annually to arrange for the services that are supposed to be provided for the state offices.
- The National Network should have a centralized cataloging and dissemination center.
- The National Association of State Directors of Vocational Education should become more directly involved in the Network operations.

- Provide additional in-state funding which would permit better state coordination and allow more of them to work with the regional centers.

As stated earlier, the same opinion survey was sent to State Directors of Community and Junior Colleges. We found that these state leaders are not as well informed about the National Network for Curriculum Coordination in Vocational and Technical Education as were Directors of Vocational Education. However, most all of those who knew of the Network and were using it seemed pleased with its services.

When asked why the services were not used, the most frequent response was that curriculum development and dissemination was not handled by state offices and that it was an institutional matter. The second most frequent response was that they did not receive any information from the Network and did not know of its existence.

In replying to Question 4 (What suggestions do you have to encourage the extensive use of the NNCCVTE?) responses were: (In looking at these suggestions, we need to keep in mind that more than half of these state administrators of community colleges do not use the service.)

- Involve both policy makers and vocational-technical staff at the state level and local campuses in the Network activities and publications to be sure that both groups are familiar with the National Network.
- Have the National Network staff participate in state-wide and national meetings and explain their activities to higher education officials.
- Increase the State Liaison Representatives to include a member of the post secondary education system in each state - one from secondary education and one from the post secondary systems where these two systems are under separate governing boards.
- The services of the National Network should be publicized through the national organization of State Higher Education Officers (SHEEO).
- Combine other instructional material dissemination efforts with the National Network, for example the Center at Ohio State University.
- Make the services of the National Network widely known throughout higher education at national, state and local levels.

Conclusions and Recommendations for Mobilizing the Support of Key Persons

State Directors of Vocational Education need success stories that they can use to generate support for their programs. They are under considerable pressure to produce high quality curriculum development and coordination which is essential. Based on the reaction of the State Directors to our survey and upon our experience in Vocational Education at the state and national levels, the following recommendations are offered.

1. Provide documented evidence of the effect of federal dollars invested in the six curriculum coordination centers.
2. Provide objective evidence whenever possible on the effect of Network curriculum materials used in the vocational and technical education classrooms of the nation's schools and colleges.
3. Determine whether or not better instruction is being provided in vocational education as a result of the work of the National Network for Curriculum Coordination in Vocational and Technical Education.
4. Devise and use quality control measures to insure that the instructional materials being disseminated are of high quality.

5. Demonstrate the effectiveness of the National Network in obtaining direct input from business and industrial leaders in training and re-training needs.

6. Develop and disseminate information on how productivity in business and industry can be improved through curriculum change in vocational and technical education.

7. Convince key persons in government and education that the products of the National Network are of such high quality that they are effective tools for improvement in instruction in vocational and technical education.

8. Devise a system of reporting that clearly documents cost reduction and dollar savings through avoidance of duplication of effort.

9. Prepare and widely circulate concise, hard-hitting reports that make known the work of the National Network to congressmen, state legislators, federal and state education leaders and policy makers.

10. Provide documented evidence that the net effect of the National Network curriculum development and dissemination efforts on students in vocational education is positive.

11. Provide documentation that vocational education students are more employable because of National Network efforts.

12. Develop an intra-state network so that instructional materials users are kept informed.

13. Relate curriculum development to both research and demonstration with emphasis on research.

14. Address the problem of utilization and dissemination with fewer constraints and less red tape.

15. Give priority to the innovative, the creative, and the emerging in funding curriculum efforts at the national, regional and state levels.

16. Be sure that the State Liaison Representatives are at a high enough level in the bureaucracy to have easy access to the State Directors of Vocational Education.

17. Keep the State Directors informed at all times.

A good start has been made toward developing a functional National Network for Curriculum Coordination in Vocational and Technical Education. Much remains to be done! I am confident that with the continued aggressive leadership of those present at this conference, the Network can be an even more valuable asset toward the improvement and expansion of vocational and technical education.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Robert M. Worthington is Associate Commissioner of Higher Education in the Utah System of Higher Education, formerly serving as U.S. Commissioner of Education and Director of the Bureau of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education. He also held positions in the state departments of education in New Jersey and Minnesota.

Dr. Worthington was professor and chairman of the Department of Industrial Education and Technology at Trenton State College and also taught at Purdue University. He held visiting professor status at Rutgers, Boston University, the University of Missouri and other universities.

Author of two books and numerous articles in professional and technical journals, he served as editor of the Journal of Industrial Teacher Education and on the editorial board of Education Digest.

In 1972, Dr. Worthington headed the U.S. delegation to the UNESCO World Conference on Adult Education and Lifelong Learning in Tokyo and in 1974 represented the United States in Paris at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Conference on Educational Reform. He has chaired and served as a member of a wide variety of distinguished councils, including chairmanship of the National Task Force on Education and Training for Minority Business Enterprise.

His bachelor of science degree was earned from Eastern Kentucky University, where he holds an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree. Dr. Worthington's master of arts degree and doctor of philosophy degree came from the University of Minnesota, from which he received an Outstanding Achievement Award.